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## Clinton urges school diversity training

### Can't trust parents to teach tolerance of gays, minorities, he says

By Paul Bedard  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

The Clinton administration, concerned that parents aren't teaching children to be unbiased, yesterday endorsed grade school "diversity" training to encourage students to be tolerant of minorities, homosexuals and the disabled.

"Children have to be taught hate," Mr. Clinton said at a White House conference on hate crimes. "We want to teach them a different way."

At the conference, designed to complement the president's race initiative, several top Cabinet officers endorsed plans for colleges and schools from kindergarten through 12th grade to implement

diversity programs to provide tolerance education the administration fears is lacking in American homes.

Attorney General Janet Reno, who hosted the conference at George Washington University, told the 425 participants to return home and make sure their schools have diversity training programs and a "conflict resolution plan" in which problem children can be enrolled.

"Find out what your schools are doing in diversity programs to teach others how to appreciate diversity," Miss Reno said.

"Teachers need more opportunity dealing with these issues," said Education Secretary Richard W. Riley.

In addition, Mr. Clinton called

for organized efforts in schools to teach students to interact with and be tolerant of other races and sexes.

"Unless there is an organized effort in your school to do it, it's not going to happen, because if you just wait for people spontaneously to go out at recess, lunch or after school, it's just not going to happen. It's too much trouble; there's too much psychic risk in it," Mr. Clinton said.

"Don't you think you almost have to have an organized effort to do it? There would almost have to be some sort of club or organization at the school — because if you think about it, your parents are still pretty well separated," he said.

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## CLINTON

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"Now, we all work together more than we ever have before, just like you go to school together. But most neighborhoods are still fairly segregated. Most houses of worship are still fairly segregated. We're making more progress on it, but I think you almost have to organize your way out of this," Mr. Clinton added.

Grade school diversity programs have been extremely controversial, in part because some parents are concerned about adding homosexuality to the list of minorities to be endorsed.

However, several school systems, notably those in Cambridge, Mass., and Provincetown, Mass., have established diversity programs to help teach students to be tolerant of minorities and homosexuals.

Mr. Clinton said intolerance of homosexuals exists partly because of "just ignorance, and the fear it breeds. I don't know this person who is different from me and I'm afraid, and I manifest this fear in bigotry or violence or something."

Much of the conference heard testimony that parents aren't doing their job teaching children to be tolerant and unbiased. That was the basis for much of the administration's push for a new diversity

effort in schools.

Tammie Schnitzer, a Jewish mother whose family in Billings, Mont., was subjected to anti-Semitic attacks, said families can foster hate.

"We really need to understand that this isn't a children's issue. We have children that we educate in our school systems, and then they go home and then they hear racial jokes from their parents," she told an agreeing president.

"I have to teach my grandparents first, before I can teach my kids," she said.

To help schools, the administration announced plans to distribute anti-hate-crime resource guides to public schools from the departments of Education and Justice.

At the one-day conference, Mr. Clinton endorsed legislation expanding the federal definition of hate crimes to include attacks on homosexuals, women and the disabled.

He also set up a "national hate-crimes network" to promote cooperation among federal, state and local prosecutors in combating hate crimes, added 50 more FBI agents and prosecutors to fight hate crimes, and created a federal hate-crimes Web page.

While the conference was generally noncontroversial, it was temporarily rattled when a protester shouted at the president: "You murdered Vince Foster. Is

that a hate crime?"

After a pause, Mr. Clinton, who was a friend of the former deputy counsel who committed suicide in July 1993, said, "I think the hate is coming from your way, not mine."

Mr. Clinton used his appearance during the first of three sessions to demand that the Senate Judiciary Committee allow the full Senate to vote on his embattled nominee to head the Justice Department's civil rights division, Bill Lann Lee.

Repeating comments made Saturday to the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest homosexual lobby, Mr. Clinton said the committee shouldn't vote Mr. Lee down, as planned, but instead pass the buck to the full Senate.

The hate-crimes conference brought together mostly Democrats who want the federal government to expand laws.

The Rev. Samuel Billy Kyles, a Tennessee Baptist pastor who was a close friend of Martin Luther King's, called on the federal government to withhold funds from colleges where hate crimes aren't prosecuted.

California state Rep. Sheila Kuehl, the openly homosexual president pro tempore of the California State Assembly, said that the president should speak out more on hate-crime issues and continue lending his support to targeted groups, such as homosexuals.